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The Centenary in the
South West.

Commemorating the admission of Tennessee
into the Union.....

by

Edward J. Mc Dermott.



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THE CENTENARY

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COMMEMORATING THE
ADMISSION OF TENNESSEE
INTO THE UNION



BY

EDWARD J. McDERMOTT



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LAKE KATHERINE, AT THE NASHVILLE CENTENNIAL.

THE CENTENARY IN THE SOUTH-WEST.



FROM the appearance of *Uncle Tom's Cabin* until after the war the people of the North and of England derived most of their knowledge of the South from that novel, from the poems of Whittier, and from the passionate speeches of Wendell Phillips, Charles Sumner, and Henry Ward Beecher. Very few Northern or European travellers penetrated into that interesting country. The soldiers and statesmen of the South excited admiration for their abilities everywhere, but the most civilized part of the world condemned slavery, and the South had to bear the odium. For years after the war the South was poor, uninviting to new-comers with or without money, misrepresented, almost friendless. In late years a gradual but great change has been wrought. Nobody now can dispute the enterprise or the unprecedented recuperation of the South. The Expositions at New Orleans and Atlanta were most admirable and most interesting; and the Centennial, which is to commemorate the admission of Tennessee into the Union in 1796, will be a golden opportunity for outsiders to see what a typical Southern community is—how the people appear in their fields, shops, and homes; how they use their resources in creating wealth, and what the extent of their culture is.

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The benefit of this celebration of Tennessee's progress during a century of freedom and the incidental commemoration of her illustrious men in the past will be great. The Greeks, especially the Athenians, in their palmy days, understood this well; hence their elaborate and gorgeous festivals and exquisitely beautiful public buildings; their wreaths and trophies and statues to the victors in literary or athletic contests and in war; their honors to those who died bravely in battle. "The love of honor," said Pericles in his funeral oration in Athens over the soldiers that had died in defence of the city, "is the only feeling that never grows old; and, in the helplessness of age, it is not the acquisition of gain, as some assert, that gives greatest pleasure, but the enjoyment of honor. . . . Where the greatest prizes for virtue are given, there also the most virtuous men are found among the citizens."

Tennessee and Kentucky resemble each other as much as twin-sisters, though they are in fact first-cousins, for the former was the child of North Carolina, while Kentucky was the well-beloved daughter of Virginia. From these two States came the hardy pioneers who at first sought hunting-grounds and then homes west of the Appalachian Mountains, and who there found lands as rich and as beautiful as any on the wide globe. Daniel Boone was the typical pioneer of Kentucky, though he was born in Pennsylvania and was raised in North Carolina. John Sevier was the typical pioneer of Tennessee, though born in Virginia. The first settlers in Tennessee came from Virginia through Cumberland Gap; but most of those who followed came from North Carolina; and the streams of immigration long continued to flow from the same sources. Few foreigners have entered into the population of Tennessee; not more than one-fourth of the population of Kentucky has come from foreign-born immigrants, and nearly all of such foreigners and their descendants have remained in the cities on the Ohio River. The people of those two States are, therefore, nearly akin in origin, of nearly equal social condition, alike in tastes and belief, with almost the same laws and political institutions, and very similar to Virginia in everything.

Tennessee slopes from the Cumberland Mountains on its eastern side to the Mississippi River, its western boundary. In the eastern third of the State there are great deposits of coal and iron, good building stone and beautiful marbles, primeval forests of valuable timber. The middle third of the State, while having rich minerals and much useful timber, is note-



THE ADMINISTRATION BUILDING.

worthy mainly for its rich soil and serviceable streams, its beautiful rolling meadows of blue-grass, its multifarious, valuable agricultural products, its almost universal thrift and comfort. The level western third is warmer and more tropical, but fertile and populous to an extreme degree. Cotton, corn, tobacco, and early vegetables thrive there prodigiously. The chief city of that section is Memphis, which, from its imposing, commanding bluff, overlooks the broad, majestic Mississippi and the lowlands of Arkansas beyond. For awhile Memphis withered and drooped under the scourge of yellow fever in 1878 and 1879; but, after her citizens realized their danger, the remedy, and their duty, they cleansed and purified the city, provided it with good sewerage, and thus stopped, probably for ever, the ravages of their dreaded enemy.

Hardly any State in the Union can surpass Tennessee in variety of crops, minerals, navigable streams, in beauty of scenery, or in historical interest. Its growth in wealth has been rapid, and almost every foot of its soil has been enriched by the blood of brave men in battle. Here the rigorous, numbing winters of the North, and the torrid, enervating summers of

the more distant South, are unknown. Men can work and the fruits of the earth can grow without intermission for ten months in the year. While the husbandman of Massachusetts or Michigan is driving his cattle over the frozen earth to their folds for food, the farmer of Tennessee is working with comfort in the balmy spring air and his young lambs are romping in rolling meadows of rich blue-grass. The heat of a Tennessee summer is not so great as that of New York or Boston, but the summer season in Tennessee lasts about twice as long.

Tennessee is, primarily, an agricultural State. Of its two million people less than twenty per cent. live in towns and villages. The only cities of large size are Nashville and Memphis. The census of 1890 says that the population of the former was 76,168, nearly double what it was in 1880; that the population of Memphis was 64,495, practically double what it was in 1880. The native-born population of Tennessee in 1890 was 1,747,489; its foreign-born population, 20,029. The colored population in 1870 was 322,331; in 1880, 403,151; in 1890, 430,-



IN THE "AUDITORIUM" ALL THE FESTIVALS AND CONGRESSES WILL BE HELD.

678. The white population in 1870 was 936,119; in 1880, was 1,138,831; in 1890, was 1,336,637. In other words, the white population in twenty years has increased 42 per cent., while the negro population has increased about 33 per cent. Hence the whites are steadily gaining on the blacks. This is, no doubt, largely due to the fact that the colored people have been flocking to the villages, towns, and cities, and have not thriven, as

might have been expected. Besides, the negroes of Tennessee and Kentucky have been scattering into all parts of the Union.

But it is not in the ways of Mammon alone that the "Volunteer State" has gained just fame. It spends annually in its

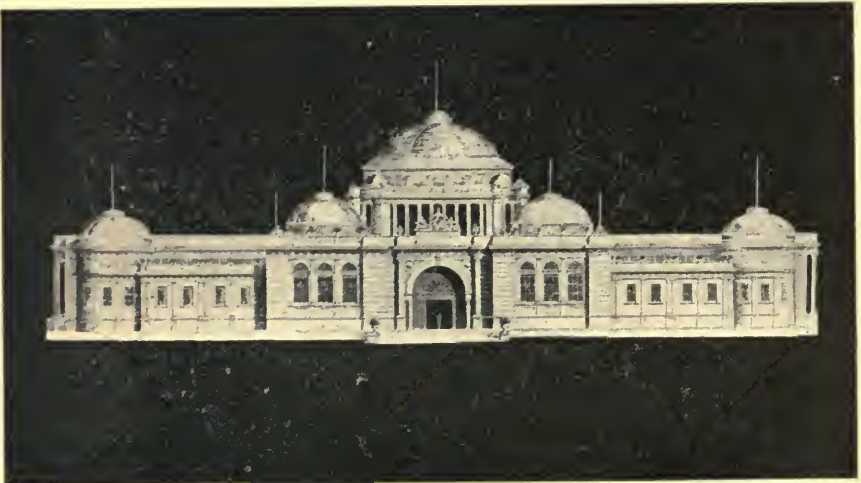


THE COMMERCE BUILDING IS ONE OF THE MOST STRIKING OF ALL THE EXHIBITION STRUCTURES.

public schools \$2,500,000 for white and for black children, distributed according to school attendance of the two races, which is 538,621 white children and 182,302 colored children. In addition to these common schools there are many private schools, Catholic and Protestant, and also colleges for men and women. At Sewanee, on the mountains in the east, is the University of the South, which has 400 students, and which, for the benefit of Southern boys, is open in the winter and has its vacation in the summer months. At Nashville is Vanderbilt University, which has a large faculty of able professors and about 700 students, handsome buildings, a beautiful campus, and the usual equipments of such an institution. In another part of the city is the University of Nashville, which has 1,500 students. At Memphis the Christian Brothers have a fine high-school for boys. Virginia and Tennessee, among the Southern States, deserve especial praise for their efforts in behalf of a general diffusion of elementary, collegiate, and university education among the people.

From the first settlement in Tennessee, about 1754, to the time of its admission into the Union in 1796, its history is made up of a record of important and stirring events. The

pioneers, pouring in from Virginia and North Carolina through Cumberland Gap, followed the courses of the Tennessee and the Cumberland rivers; waged bloody and incessant warfare with the fierce Cherokees until the latter were driven away; and finally, in August, 1784, as North Carolina and the federal government hesitated and vacillated in considering the request of the settlers for the right to form a new commonwealth, those hardy men impatiently set up the independent State of Franklin; but on March 1, 1788, after their leader and governor, John Sevier, was tried for high treason and was saved only by a daring rescue, they returned to their allegiance to North Carolina, which in 1790 ceded the territory in dispute to the federal government, and in 1792 the northern part of the State of Franklin, which embraced the territory of Kentucky, but had never been recognized by the Kentuckians, was received into the Union as the State of Kentucky, and in 1796 the southern part entered the Union as the State of Tennessee. Those daring men were impatient of control; they were quick to attack any authority or power that obstructed their rights or wishes. It did not seem to make much difference to them whether they were opposing the Indians, the English king, or the American Union. Here was the first sign of that impatient, indomitable,



THE PRODUCTS OF THE FIELD ARE AN IMPORTANT PART OF A NATION'S WEALTH.

unyielding spirit to which we may ascribe the Resolutions of 1798 and the Rebellion of 1861. It is an interesting fact that slavery never thrived in the mountainous parts of Tennessee or



THE TRANSPORTATION BUILDING IS REMARKABLE FOR POETIC SIMPLICITY.

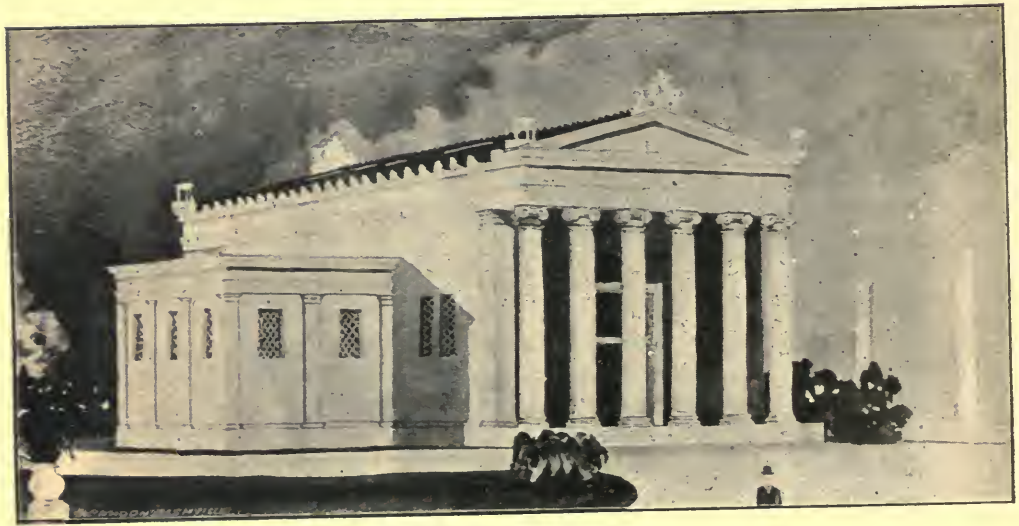
Kentucky, which lay along the borders of Virginia and North Carolina. The white people of those upland regions, though not as prosperous or progressive as the white people of the lowlands, sympathized with the Union, and furnished a large quota of loyal troops to the armies of the North. As slaves were profitable only in the rich agricultural districts where large plantations were owned, there were very few slaves in the eastern part of Tennessee and Kentucky, and, therefore, slavery had few ardent champions there, and consequently secession was not popular.

The early period of Tennessee's history is typified in the lives of those eminent and well-known frontiersmen, John Sevier, Andrew Jackson, and David Crockett. Sevier, a colonel in the Revolutionary War, the first governor of the short-lived State of Franklin and later the first governor of the State of Tennessee, was a handsome athlete, an Indian fighter of renown, and an able, picturesque executive of a pioneer commonwealth. Andrew Jackson, born in North Carolina in 1767 of Irish parents, was a soldier in the Revolutionary army before he was fifteen years old and began to practise law in Tennessee before he was twenty. He settled in Nashville in 1790, and soon married the charming grass-widow who was ever after the chief object of his love. He was the first representative of Tennessee in Congress and was several times her senator. His career as a soldier, not only in his campaign against the Southern Indians, but also against the Spaniards and the English, is well

known. His victory at the battle of New Orleans on the morning of January 8, 1815, two weeks after peace had been agreed on in Ghent, but before it was known in America, made his fame secure. On that day the Tennessee and Kentucky rifles were his mainstay. His races for the presidency with Henry Clay, the idol of Kentucky, and his memorable controversy with Calhoun over nullification in South Carolina, and over the charter of the Bank of the United States, then before Congress, are important events in the history of our country, and will make many visitors to Tennessee seek, with great interest and respect, the Hermitage where the old hero spent the best years of his life, and where he now lies buried.

Davy Crockett, "the crack shot of the wilderness," was a gallant soldier in the War of 1812, under Jackson; a generous, witty, bold frontiersman, and a unique member of Congress who, at fifty, was killed at the storming of the Alamo, at Bexar, while fighting for the independence of Texas.

President Polk was born in North Carolina in 1795, but became an adopted son of Tennessee when he was eleven years



THE HISTORY OF A PEOPLE INSPIRES PATRIOTISM.

old, and, though he was not a brilliant man, he was a valuable representative in Congress for ten years, twice speaker of the House, governor of Tennessee, twice an unsuccessful candidate for re-election to that office, and at last, in 1845, was elected President of the United States.

In later days Andrew Johnson, the tailor, who was taught

to read by his wife when he was twenty-six, and who became senator, governor, vice-president, and, by Lincoln's assassination, President of the United States, was a notable son of Tennessee;



THE WOMAN'S BUILDING IS MODELLED SOMEWHAT AFTER "THE HERMITAGE."

and so was the brave Union admiral, David Farragut, and so too was the dashing rebel general, Nathan B. Forrest. The greater part of the fame of the brilliant Felix Grundy was made as a lawyer, a senator, and a cabinet officer of Tennessee, though he was born in Virginia in 1777 and removed to Kentucky in 1780, and remained there till he settled in Nashville in 1808. The boundaries between Virginia and the Carolinas, Kentucky and Tennessee, have ever been shadowy. We are bone of one bone and flesh of one flesh.

Both Abraham Lincoln and Jefferson Davis were born in Kentucky, which strove at the beginning of the Civil War to be neutral, and thus for awhile acted as a buffer for Tennessee; but, before long, Kentucky was compelled to take sides with the Union, and then the southern part of the State and the whole of Tennessee became a grand theatre of war where, for about three years, there were hostile marches and counter-marches, innumerable skirmishes, and great pitched battles of vast forces. Tennessee furnished to the Union 34,000 soldiers; to the Confederacy 115,000 men, one-sixth of its forces; and in her borders were fought the memorable battles of Fort Donelson, Shiloh, Lookout Mountain, Chickamauga, and Missionary Ridge. Nearly one-fifth of all the men buried in

national cemeteries are buried beneath the soil of Tennessee. When the armies of the South were compelled to retire from her borders, and the Mississippi was opened to federal gunboats, the Confederacy was doomed. In fact, when Albert Sidney Johnston, that modest, refined gentleman, that gallant, brilliant leader of armies, fell at Shiloh on April 6, 1862, and the unyielding Grant was saved by the timely arrival of reinforcements, the star of the Confederacy began plainly to fade away and Southern hope grew faint; but the indomitable people of Tennessee never faltered in their course till borne down by overwhelming forces.

From the close of the war in 1865 to the adoption of the new constitution in 1870, Tennessee passed through the terrible ordeal of Reconstruction. The leading men of the State were disfranchised; United States military officers and State militia officers, under the orders of Brownlow, dominated elections; the enfranchised blacks, not yet prepared for self-government, were put in control of the ballot-box; the corrupt "Alden Ring" saddled a debt of nearly a million dollars on the small town of Nashville, which had about thirty-five thousand inhabitants; the colored people, in their secret, oath-bound Union



THE CHILDREN OF THE STATE ERECTED THEIR OWN BUILDING.

League of America, and some foolish whites, in the night-riding Ku-klux-klan, sought for mastery by underhanded means which rendered party discussions of little consequence and gave power to unworthy leaders; the State debt was increased to

nearly seventeen millions by the issue of bonds which were sold at prices ranging from 17 to 40 cents in greenbacks, then greatly below par; and the whole course of public affairs was disastrous and terrifying in the extreme; but since 1870 the



THE PARTHENON, EXACTLY REPRODUCED.

recuperation has been marvellous in speed and wonderful in results.

Classic taste runs high in the South, and therefore it is no wonder that in the buildings of the Centennial we find splendid specimens of the best art of Athens in her days of glory. It was a happy thought to reproduce exactly for us the Parthenon, that our eyes might see what our imagination has long striven in vain to body forth. In modern Athens the noble ruins of the Parthenon, which was dedicated 435 years before the birth of Christ, now stand upon the Acropolis; only the scholar of vivid imagination can picture it to himself as it really was; but in Nashville this monument of the genius and the imperishable fame of the architect Ictinus and of the sculptor Phidias is to be seen as the Greeks beheld it from all parts of Athens. The exterior is a perfect copy; even the dimensions are identical; and the interior, which is to be used for the art exhibit, is sufficiently like the original to make us understand its majestic beauty. Pericles, who inspired this dream of art, Phidias and Ictinus, who gave it being, and Demosthenes, who gloried in it as a proof that his countrymen loved honor and beauty more than money—all those immortal men excite our gratitude anew

as, under the porticoes of this re-created temple of Minerva, goddess of needle-work, wisdom and peace, we stand entranced and gaze with unfailing delight on the fountains, flowers, and beautiful, imposing buildings wherein Tennessee has gathered together the wonders of modern commerce and Christian civilization. When Byron renewed the ancient glory of Greece by his splendid bursts of poetic eloquence, and popularized the aspirations of her patriotic sons for independence; when seventy-three years ago he gave up his life in a vain effort to hasten the dawn of a new day over the mountains and valleys of Ilium, he would have died in some sense satisfied if he could have foreseen that, toward the close of the century, the people of the United States would be reproducing, for their edification and delight, the Parthenon, while all Greece, united and respected, was proving itself worthy of its ancient fame, was not only growing in strength, riches, and refinement, but in warlike spirit, and was able to strike a manly blow for its kindred in "the Isles of Greece" against the hated Moslem foe.

To the intelligent visitor no part of the Centennial will attract more attention than the building in which will be displayed the progress of the negro from degradation in Africa to servitude, and then freedom, in America. Though slavery is wrong, it must be said that, but for the presence of the negroes in the South and their improving environment there; but for the enlightenment which they received from their Southern masters, who were generally intelligent and humane, they could not, in any reasonable degree, have been prepared in a few generations for the rights and privileges of citizenship in the highest type of government on the globe. Much has been done, but much remains to be done in the upward movement of the race. In an address by a most intelligent negro, Edward Reed, of Detroit, in behalf of the National Catholic Industrial School for colored youths, he lately said:

"The race is paying taxes on \$370,000 worth of property. We have 57 college presidents, 30,000 school teachers, 25,000 Protestant ministers who have studied theology, 100 authors on different subjects, 1,000 lawyers, 800 doctors, 250 newspapers, 2 dailies, 4 magazines, 4 banks, and several 'building and loan associations.' . . . The colored Catholics of the United States number 250,000, 2 priests and 30 young men studying for the priesthood, 3 convents, 200 sisters of various orders, and a number of orphan asylums."

The colored people now have equal rights in the courts and

at the ballot-box. If they use those rights as intelligent, thrifty, patriotic citizens, the South's future will be marvellously bright ; if they neglect or abuse those rights, her future must be full of disappointment and bitterness. They may handicap her in the race for eminence, but their own chances of success must be best in her domain.

When the people who visit the Centennial see the Parthe-



A TYPE OF ROMAN-DORIC ORDER OF ARCHITECTURE.

non they will, no doubt, admire its simple grandeur, and probably wonder at the high state of civilization reached by the pagan Greeks four hundred years before the birth of Christ ; but that eloquent monument of the past should also inspire other thoughts. It should teach us that a nation of many sterling virtues and happy opportunities may rise to greatness and enjoy freedom in glory for a hundred years, and then decay, fall into slavery, and, for centuries afterward, be utterly wretched and despised.

As Byron wrote :

“ There is the moral of all human tales ;
 ’Tis but the same rehearsal of the past :
 First freedom, and then glory. When that fails,
 Wealth, vice, corruption—barbarism at last.”



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